

REMARKS

Claim Rejections

The Examiner has rejected claims 40-47 and 51-58 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Summers (U.S. Patent No. 6,080,191) in view of McCrory (U.S. Patent No. 5,951,599). The Examiner has also rejected claims 48, 50, 59, 61-70 and 72 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Summers in view of McCrory in further view of Bynon (U.S. Patent No. 5,667,523). The Examiner has also rejected claims 49, 60 and 71 as being unpatentable under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Summers in view of McCrory and Bynon in further view of Wulfman (U.S. Patent Pub. No. 2003/0139802).

Applicant has carefully considered the Examiner's comments. In order to expedite prosecution of Applicant's application, Applicant has cancelled claims 51-72. Claims 40 and 48 have been amended. Claims 73-74 have been added.

Claim 40 has been amended to recite that the graft material is secured to the support frame by folding each end of the graft material around a circumferential frame thread. As a result, a double thickness area of two layers of graft material is formed. The two graft layers are connected to each other, thereby securing the graft material to the support frame. None of the prior art of record discloses these limitations, and there is no motivation or suggestion to combine the prior art to achieve the claimed invention.

In particular, McCrory fails to disclose the claimed intraluminal device and the claimed manner of securing the graft material to the support frame. As previously explained, McCrory discloses a mesh structure and does not disclose the claimed support frame with circumferential members. (See, e.g., col. 2, lines 62-67; col. 3, lines 1-22; col. 4, lines 20-43). McCrory does not even specifically describe how the graft material is secured to the support frame. (See, e.g., col. 4, lines 15-18). Thus, there is no suggestion in McCrory to secure a graft layer to a support frame with circumferential frame threads by folding the ends of the graft material around the circumferential frame threads.

Likewise, Summers does not disclose or suggest securing a graft material to a support frame as claimed. None of the figures in McCrory even shows a graft material.

The only reference to a graft material is in a short description at the end of the specification. (Col. 11, lines 25-41). In fact, Summers teaches away from the claimed invention because Summers suggests the use of a graft layer around the full circumference of the support frame ("may comprise a tube-shaped member having an inside diameter"). By contrast, claim 40 recites that the graft material extends "only a partial distance along the circumference of the support frame." Furthermore, Summers does not even specifically describe how the graft material is secured to the support frame. Thus, Summers does not disclose or suggest the claimed invention.

Bynon also does not disclose or suggest the claimed manner of securing the graft material to the support frame. Contrary to the claimed invention, Bynon discloses a mesh tubular structure. (Figure 1). In Bynon, the end of the graft material is folded back to encase the end of the tubular structure. (Col. 4, line 57 to col. 5, line 7). By contrast, the claimed invention relates to a support frame with circumferential frame threads, where the graft material is folded around a circumferential frame thread. Bynon does not disclose or suggest these limitations.


Because the prior art of record does not disclose or suggest all of the limitations of claim 40, claim 40 is allowable as now presented. Claims 41-50 and 73-74 are also allowable since these claims depend from claim 40. Any further arguments that could be made in support of Applicant's dependant claims would be superfluous at this time. Thus, the Examiner's § 103 rejections may now be withdrawn.

Conclusion

In response to the Examiner's comments, Applicant has amended claim 40 and cancelled claims 51-72. In addition, claim 48 has been amended and claims 73-74 have been added. None of the prior art of record discloses or suggests all of the limitations required by the claims as now presented. In particular, none of the prior art of record discloses or suggests securing a graft material to a support frame with circumferential frame threads by folding each end of the graft material around a circumferential frame thread. Thus, Applicant's claims are allowable. If the Examiner has any questions about the amended claims, the Examiner may reach Applicants attorney, Richard E. Stanley, Jr., at 312-321-4279.

Accordingly, Applicant requests reconsideration and allowance of the application.

Respectfully submitted,


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